Have a temperature over 98.6°F?

People with cancer are more prone to fevers, especially during treatment. A fever may be a sign of an infection. If you get a fever during your chemotherapy treatment, it may be a medical emergency.

Fever may be the only sign that you have an infection, and an infection during chemotherapy can be life-threatening.

Sometimes a very low temperature (94-95°F) while feeling very sick can also be a sign of infection.

If you go to the emergency room:

• Tell the person checking you in that you are a cancer patient undergoing chemotherapy.
• If you have a fever, you might have an infection in the setting of a very low white blood cell count. This is a life-threatening condition, and you should be seen quickly.

Tips for managing fever potential:

• Encourage visitors, family, friends who are sick (examples: fever, a cold, diarrhea, a cough, flu) or not feeling well to social distance and contact only by phone or electronic devise until they are well again.
• Ask visitors to wear a face mask and to wash their hands
• Keep a working thermometer (w/ new battery if battery powered) in a convenient location, know how to use it.
• Keep your doctor’s phone numbers with you at all times. Know what number to call when their office is open and when closed.
• Know your temperature before you call the on-call doctor so you can report the number to the provider immediately.

Prevention of fevers and infection –Clean your hands with soap and water and/or hand sanitizer:

• before, during and after cooking
• before and after you eat
• after returning from anywhere outside your home
• going to the bathroom
• after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing
• after touching or cleaning up after pet; after touching trash
• before / after caring for a wound
• before / after caring for your port, catheter or other access device.

Resources for Additional Information:
- Cancer.Net, When to Call the Doc During Cancer Treatment
- Cancer.Net, Infection
- American Cancer Society, Fever
- CDC, Prepare: Watch out for Fever
- NIH, NCI Infection and Neutropenia
- CancerCare.org, Neutripenia and Infections
- Chemocare, Fever and Chemotherapy

Reursos en Español:
- Cancer.Net, Cuándo llamar al médico durante el tratamiento para el cáncer
- Cancer.Net, Infección
- American Cancer Society, Fiebre
- NIH, NCI Infección y neutropenia durante el tratamiento del cancer
- Chemocare, Fiebre, fiebre neutropénica y su relación con la quimioterapia